

In the Claims

Please amend Claims 3, 7 and 14-16 as follows.

3. (Amended) A method as claimed in Claim 1 [or Claim 2], wherein the particulate material is an admixture of the metal and the inert, solid diluent, the diluent being present in an amount of from 20 to 80 percent by weight, based upon admixture weight.

7. (Amended) A method as claimed in Claim 1 [or Claim 2], wherein the particulate material is (4) an admixture of a metal selected from aluminum and aluminum alloys and at least one ceramic material precursor, the ceramic material or precursor being present in an amount of from 1 to 75 percent by weight, based on admixture weight.

14. (Amended) A method as claimed in Claim 1 [or Claim 13], wherein the whiskers have a thickness of from 0.5 to 5  $\mu\text{m}$  and a length of from 5 to 100  $\mu\text{m}$ .

15. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any of] Claim[s] 1-14] 2, wherein the metal is an aluminum alloy with an aluminum content of at least 75 percent by weight, based upon alloy weight.

16. (Amended) A method as claimed in [any of] Claim[s] 1 [-10, 12, 13 and 14], wherein the product is a porous body and the method further comprises a step (c) in which the porous body is infiltrated with at least one polymer or at least one metal.

Please cancel Claims 20 to 22.

Please add the following new Claim 23.

*31* 23. A method for producing aluminum nitride by combustion synthesis comprising:

- a) igniting a particulate admixture of an inert, solid diluent and a metal selected from the group consisting of aluminum and aluminum alloys with an external ignition source in the presence of gaseous nitrogen at a pressure of from about 0.75 to about 30 atmospheres (0.075 to 3 MPa), the admixture having a bulk density and an aluminum metal content sufficient to establish and maintain a self-propagating combustion wave that passes through the admixture; and
- b) allowing the combustion wave to pass through substantially all of the admixture to convert at least 75 percent of the aluminum in the admixture to aluminum nitride.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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